



1. **Guiding Principles**

General Faculties Council (“**GFC**”) has on many occasions confirmed its commitment to having a framework for governance that assists rather than impedes the conduct of its business. Underpinning this governance framework (herein, the “**Framework**”) are the following guiding principles:

- 1.1 This Framework is designed to promote inclusive and respectful dialogue, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued, without unduly restricting debate or limiting participation in meetings. Its purpose is to facilitate meaningful engagement while maintaining efficient and effective decision-making processes.
- 1.2 GFC is committed to:
 - (a) fostering openness, transparency, and respectful communication in all of its governance processes, ensuring accountability and trust in decision-making;
 - (b) operating in alignment with the principle of collegial academic governance, including:
 - (i) advancing equity, diversity and inclusion through dedicated resources and leadership;
 - (ii) supporting Indigenous Initiatives and the University of Alberta’s (the “**University**”) response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action;
 - (iii) ensuring equitable, inclusive, and participatory decision-making;
 - (iv) facilitating meaningful individual engagement in governance;
 - (v) promoting responsiveness, respect, and reciprocity between governing bodies and the administration;
 - (vi) ensuring that all GFC members, regardless of category, have equal rights to participate in the work of GFC; and
 - (vii) listening to and valuing the multiplicity of perspectives and lived experiences that reflect the diversity of the University community.

2. **Interpretive Guidance**

Except where otherwise expressly provided herein, and as the context requires, any reference to “**General Faculties Council**” or “**GFC**” in this Framework shall be deemed to include any one or more of its standing committees, and any reference to the “**Chair**” shall be deemed to include any one or more of the chairs of the GFC standing committees.

3. General Procedural Rules for Meetings

- 3.1 GFC meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the applicable provisions of this Framework.
- 3.2 In resolving procedural issues during meetings of GFC, the following order of precedence shall apply:
- (a) **First**: the procedural rules set out in this Framework shall govern.
 - (b) **Second**: in the absence of guidance within this Framework, the applicable provisions (if any) of the *Post-secondary Learning Act* (Alberta) (the “**PSLA**”) shall govern.
 - (c) **Third**: Should neither this Framework nor the PSLA provide clear guidance, the then most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be consulted and applied by the Chair as the final authority to resolve the procedural issue.
- 3.3 The Chair is responsible for guiding meetings of GFC, applying procedural rules, and deciding questions pertaining to such procedural rules. Any procedural decisions of the Chair are subject to appeal. Any appeal requires a second, and to be successful must be supported by a majority of votes cast on the appeal.
- 3.4 The Chair will not participate actively in any debate regarding a motion before GFC without passing the role of the Chair to the Vice-Chair for the duration of the debate and the subsequent vote.

4. Meetings

- 4.1 GFC will meet during the Fall, Winter and Spring terms of the University's academic year, with the exception of the Committee for the Documentation of Indigeneity (or its successor), which may also meet during the Summer term of the University's academic year.
- 4.2 The schedule for the meetings of GFC (the “**Meeting Schedule**”) shall be determined by the Office of University Governance (“**UGov**”) having regard to (a) subsection 4.1, above, (b) the human, financial and technological resources available to UGov to support meetings of GFC, and (c) refraining from scheduling plenary GFC meetings during the periods of the University's academic year set aside for final examinations or reading weeks.
- 4.3 The Meeting Schedule shall be published and made publicly available no later than one month prior to the commencement of each academic year.
- 4.4 The GFC Executive Committee (or its successor) may cancel a plenary meeting of GFC if it determines, acting reasonably, that:

- (a) there are an insufficient number of substantive agenda items to be considered by GFC at such meeting; and/or
- (b) the nature of the agenda items to be considered by GFC at such meeting do not warrant holding a meeting for the consideration of the same.

For the purposes of this Section 4.4, an agenda item is “**substantive**” if such item is coming to a plenary meeting of GFC as a discussion or decision item.

- 4.5 Notice of the cancellation of a plenary meeting of GFC shall be published and made available to GFC members no later than one (1) week prior to the date of the meeting.
- 4.6 The Chair of a GFC standing committee may cancel a standing committee meeting if, in the opinion of the Chair, acting reasonably, the nature of the agenda items for such meeting make it reasonable to defer consideration of the same, and provided that notice of such cancellation is promptly given to the members of the standing committee.
- 4.7 A Chair may at any time call a special meeting of GFC or the GFC standing committee which they chair (as the case may be).
- 4.8 Not less than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the voting members of:
 - (a) GFC, in respect of a plenary special meeting of GFC, or
 - (b) a GFC standing committee, in respect of a special committee meeting,may requisition the applicable Chair in writing to call a special meeting for the purposes stated in the requisition. Such a written request shall be delivered to UGov.
- 4.9 Notice of a special meeting shall be published and made available to applicable members no less than thirty (30) days in advance of such special meeting, provided, however, that the time for the notice may be waived or abridged at any time:
 - (a) with the consent of two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the members entitled thereto; or
 - (b) at the direction of the GFC Executive Committee.
- 4.10 GFC meetings shall be scheduled to last for not more than two (2) hours, provided that the time for the conduct of a GFC meeting may be extended on a motion, with a second, to extend the meeting for not more than one (1) additional hour with the assent of the majority of votes cast on such a motion to extend (the “**First Extension Period**”). Upon the end of the First Extension Period, the time for the conduct of such GFC meeting may be extended on a motion, with a second, for not more than one (1) additional hour with the assent of two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the votes cast on such a motion to extend. In no circumstances shall a GFC meeting continue uninterrupted for more than four (4) consecutive hours and no debate on new items of business will be entertained after GFC has been sitting for three (3) consecutive hours.
- 4.12 If the time allotted for the conduct of a GFC meeting expires before the business of the meeting has been completed, such meeting shall be adjourned by the Chair of such

meeting to a date, not sooner than five (5) nor more than fifteen (15) days after the date of such meeting, at a time determined by the Chair, acting reasonably. At least three (3) days' notice of the reconvening of the adjourned meeting shall be given to meeting participants.

- 4.13 Without the express permission of the Chair, no participants, guests or observers at any GFC meeting shall make, or cause to be made, any audio, video, photographic or transcription records, including screen captures or recordings, of such meeting.

5. Meeting in Absence of the Public

- 5.1 Meetings of GFC may be held in the absence of the public only if the subject-matter being considered in the absence of the public concerns:

- (a) personal information of an individual, including an employee of the University;
- (b) confidential financial information, such as the University budget or other sensitive monetary discussions;
- (c) drafting or reviewing internal GFC policies and/or procedures, especially those that might not yet be finalized and where premature public scrutiny could lead to a misinterpretation of the same;
- (d) proprietary research, intellectual property, or other sensitive academic work;
- (e) a sensitive situation, such as handling a public relations crisis or emergency response plans (e.g., related to student safety); or
- (f) the adjudication of any teaching awards in accordance with the *Recognition of Teaching Policy*.

Meetings held in the absence of the public are considered to be “**closed meetings**”. All proceedings and materials distributed or presented in the course of a closed meeting are strictly confidential and all non-members of GFC, except such individuals specifically authorized or invited to participate in such a closed meeting, shall not be permitted to attend.

- 5.2 Subject to the limitations of space and orderly conduct as determined by the Chair, members of the University community and the general public may attend open meetings as observers. Observers may only speak if expressly invited to do so by the Chair.

6. Questions and Information Requests

- 6.1 Questions on an issue within GFC's jurisdiction may be submitted in writing to UGov no less than six (6) working days before the next GFC meeting to receive a written response.
- 6.2 Questions with regard to a specific item on an agenda should be raised during the consideration of that item.

- 6.3 If a GFC member desires more information with respect to a specific item on an agenda than that which is provided as part of the meeting agenda, such GFC member may make a request of UGov to undertake reasonable efforts to obtain additional information with respect to such item.

7. Agendas

- 7.1 The agenda of each plenary GFC meeting will be proposed by the GFC Executive Committee (or its successor) and approved by GFC. The GFC Executive Committee will ensure that items put before a plenary GFC meeting are complete and ready for discussion and that the meeting agenda is published in advance of the meeting.
- 7.2 A GFC member wishing to add an item to the agenda for a plenary GFC meeting must contact the Chair or UGov five (5) working days in advance of the next GFC Executive Committee meeting to allow for discussion on whether the item is complete and ready to be added to an agenda.
- 7.3 Should a GFC member wish to add an item to the agenda at a meeting of GFC, a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority of votes cast in favor of such addition is required. If such an addition is approved, the Chair will then determine where the item appears on the agenda. In cases where the Chair or UGov has been informed within a reasonable period of time in advance of a meeting of GFC of a planned request to add a new item, but after the agenda for such meeting has been published, the proposal shall be circulated to members.
- 7.4 The Chair will entertain a request from a GFC member to change the order of items on an agenda provided that such GFC member specifies the reasons for making such a request. The Chair is not obliged to agree to change the order of items on an agenda.
- 7.5 Each agenda for a GFC meeting will include a Question Period as a standing item wherein GFC members may raise a question. For clarity:
- (a) Question period consists of both responses to written questions submitted in advance and, subject to subsection 7.5(b), responses to questions from the floor of the meeting.
 - (b) The Chair will rule on whether a question from the floor of the meeting can be answered expeditiously. If in the opinion of the Chair such question cannot be answered expeditiously, it will be referred to the appropriate person for the provision of a response at the next meeting.
 - (c) No debate is to be permitted of any questions posed or responded to in the course of a Question Period (whether in advance or from the floor of the meeting). GFC members who have submitted a question in advance will be permitted to ask one or more supplementary questions, after which other GFC members will have the same opportunity.

- 7.6 Reports from GFC standing committees are included on the agendas for plenary GFC meetings for information only. Clarifying questions with respect to any such reports may be asked, but no debate may take place respecting such items.
- 7.7 Information items on any GFC meeting agenda may be converted to a discussion item if a GFC member gives two (2) working days notice to UGov in order to ensure that an appropriate person is present at the meeting to which the agenda relates to answer questions that may arise during discussion of the converted item.
- 7.8 Agendas and materials for open session GFC meetings are posted at ualberta.ca/governance or such other location as UGov may specify from time to time.

8. Quorum**8.1 Quorum for:**

- (a) a plenary GFC meeting is:
- (i) one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the total GFC members during the Fall term and Winter term of the academic year;
 - (ii) one-quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the total GFC members during the Spring term and Summer term of the academic year; and
- (b) a GFC standing committee meeting is one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the voting members of such committee or, where a committee has an even number of voting members, one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) plus one (1) of the voting members of such committee.

8.2 Vacancies on GFC and on GFC standing committees are not included when establishing quorum.

8.2 A duly called meeting which starts with a quorum present shall be deemed to have a continuing quorum, notwithstanding the departure of voting members, unless the quorum is challenged by a voting member. In the event of a challenge, the remaining members may choose to adjourn or continue the meeting. In the event of a decision to continue a meeting without quorum, the minutes shall record this fact and any decisions taken must be ratified at the next meeting.

9. Motions

9.1 All motions must be moved and seconded by GFC members, with the exception that motions to appoint new GFC members may only be moved and seconded by GFC members. While GFC members can expect to have notice of motions in advance of meetings, pursuant to section 7.3, a motion may come before GFC from the floor of a meeting, with the approval of the assembled GFC members.

9.2 Motions pass with a majority of the votes cast, except for the following:

- (a) a motion:

- (i) to add an item to a meeting agenda pursuant to section 7.3; or
 - (ii) to close debate/call the question;
- require a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority of votes cast; and
- (b) To make a motion or introduce a motion, a GFC member must be recognized by the Chair. In the interest of clarity and to expedite the conduct of business, it is advisable to provide a written motion to UGov if no prior notice of the motion has been given. The GFC member making a motion will be invited by the Chair to speak first in any ensuing debate.
 - (c) During the course of a GFC meeting, a GFC member may make a notice of motion for debate at the next GFC meeting. In such cases, the GFC Executive Committee will be responsible for the placement of such motion on the next GFC agenda.

10. Motions for Specific Purposes

- 10.1 Motion to Amend: A GFC member may make a motion to amend the wording of a pending motion before the pending motion itself is voted upon, provided that such amended wording relates to the subject matter of the pending motion and is not introducing new subject matter. A motion to amend is debatable.
- 10.2 Motion to Adjourn: A motion to adjourn is a motion to close the meeting. It must be seconded, is not debatable or amendable, and typically requires a majority of votes cast. During the months of March and April, a motion to adjourn requires a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority of votes cast if substantive items of business remain on the agenda.
- 10.3 Motion to Table: A motion to table enables a pending question to be laid aside until some future time. The motion cannot be debated. The mover may make a statement regarding what information they believe would be required to take the item from the table, and the proposer of the item may make a brief comment on the impact of tabling the motion.
- 10.4 Motion to Take from the Table: A motion to bring a tabled motion back before GFC. The motion cannot be debated.
- 10.5 Motion to Reconsider: A motion whereby an item which was voted upon at the current or the immediately preceding meeting is reconsidered by the assembly. The motion is debatable and if such a motion is passed, proceedings are restored to the point immediately prior to the vote to which it applies.
- 10.6 Motion to Rescind: A motion that is only made when a motion to reconsider is unable to be made. A motion to rescind is debatable, requires the support of two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the total membership if prior notice of such motion was not given, but only a majority of votes cast if prior notice of such motion was given.

11. Debate

- 11.1 A list of speakers will be kept by the Chair and/or the meeting secretary. Normally, a GFC member may not speak for a second time until the Chair is satisfied that all GFC members wishing to speak for the first time have done so.
- 11.2 A GFC member who has the floor may not normally be interrupted. However, the Chair may interrupt a speaker if the speaker is out of order:
- (a) by using unacceptable language,
 - (b) being abusive of other GFC members, guests or observers, or
 - (c) is not speaking to the item.
- If the Chair does not do so, a GFC member may raise any of the foregoing behavior as a point of order or a question of privilege.
- 11.3 It is the right of any GFC member who notices a breach of the procedural rules of GFC to insist on their enforcement. If the Chair fails to notice such a breach, any GFC member may rise to make the appropriate point of order, calling on the Chair for a ruling. A point of order does not require a second, it is not debatable or amendable, and cannot be reconsidered.
- 11.4 Upon hearing a member call the question, the Chair will ask the assembled GFC members if they are ready to vote on the motion being discussed. If there appears to be opposition to closing the debate, the Chair may ask for a motion to close debate. If seconded, the assembled GFC members will then vote on this motion, which will require a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority of votes cast to be passed, and proceed accordingly.
- 11.5 When discussion of an issue and the formal rules pertaining to making motions, debate, and voting seem to be a hindrance to thoughtful discussion, the GFC agenda can allow for items that offer an opportunity for a less structured discussion guided by the Chair and the consensus of the GFC members in attendance.

12. Delegates

- 12.1 GFC members who serve on GFC by virtue of their office may send a delegate to GFC meetings; such delegates shall act with all the rights of membership. There shall be no delegates for other GFC members.

13. Voting

- 13.1 All GFC members are charged with the responsibility of examining issues before GFC and voting as they judge fit on such issues. No GFC member, regardless of how that person gains membership on GFC, is an instructed delegate. An abstention is not considered to be a vote cast.
- 13.2 The Chair votes only in the instance of a tie. When there is a tie vote, the motion is lost if the Chair abstains.

- 13.3 All GFC members may participate in discussions and debate; only voting GFC members may move, second and vote on motions.
- 13.4 In cases where extensive discussion and debate is not essential to determining a course of action and it is necessary for an item of business to be decided before the next scheduled meeting, the Chair and meeting secretary of a GFC standing committee may conduct business and make decisions through electronic voting methods, including email, video conferencing platforms, or other secure electronic communication tools (each an “**Electronic Voting Method**”), provided that all members of the particular GFC standing committee are given reasonable notice and the opportunity to participate in the vote. A vote conducted electronically shall have the same force and effect as a vote taken in person, and the results shall be documented in the official minutes of the next meeting of the standing committee.
- 13.5 Upon receiving an item of business for electronic vote, any member of the particular standing committee may request that the matter be discussed and debated at the next meeting of the standing committee or at a special meeting of the standing committee and the vote be delayed until after such discussion and debate, with the Chair, acting reasonably, determining if such request should be accepted.
- 13.6 In cases where GFC is the electing body to populate certain selection committees and other bodies, the election process may use an Electronic Voting Method provided that all GFC members are given reasonable notice and the opportunity to participate in the vote.
- 13.7 Reports of recommendations from the GFC Nominating Committee may be distributed electronically to GFC members and are considered approved if no additional nominations are received by the deadlines indicated on the report.

13.8 When meeting remotely, GFC will vote on motions using an Electronic Voting Method.

14. Records of Proceedings

- 14.1 The official record of meetings of GFC shall be the minutes taken by the meeting secretary and approved by GFC.
- 14.2 The minutes shall reflect the decisions made and a high-level summary of the discussion and debate.

15. Amendment of this Framework

This Framework may be amended by a majority of votes cast at a duly constituted meeting of GFC, provided that notice of any proposed amendment has been given in the meeting materials, and that a quorum is present at the time the vote is taken. This Framework is to be reviewed every three years.

16. Links

[GFC Terms of Reference](#)

17. Additional Procedural Rules, Guidance and Principles

- 17.1 GFC may, from time to time, establish, modify, and approve specific procedural rules, guidance and principles as it deems necessary or desirable for its effective governance. Such procedural rules, guidance and principles, once approved by GFC, shall be adopted and incorporated as Appendices to this Framework. Each Appendix shall have the same force and effect as if fully set forth herein, provided that it does not conflict with this Framework or applicable law. GFC may amend or repeal any such procedural rules, guidance and/or principles as necessary.
- 17.2 Any existing specific procedural rules, guidance and principles previously approved by GFC are hereby adopted and incorporated as Appendices to this Framework, and shall have the same force and effect as if fully set forth herein, provided that they do not conflict with this Framework or applicable law.
- 17.3 UGov is authorized and directed to assign numbers to all such Appendices to this Framework using the following convention: "**Appendix 17[letter]**".

Approved by General Faculties Council:

April 21, 2017

March 22, 2022

***, 2024

Editorial Updates made by the Office of University Governance:

September 11, 2026

Appendix 17A

GFC Roles and Responsibilities Document